

TERRORIST ATTACKS AND SYRIAN REFUGEES

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. COMSTOCK). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the gentleman from California (Mr. COSTA) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. COSTA. Madam Speaker, I rise today to express my deepest condolences to all the individuals who have been affected in recent months by terrorist attacks throughout the world and, also, to focus on the need for America to step up and to in a more comprehensive way lead a global effort against these terrorists.

My thoughts and prayers—and our thoughts and prayers as a Nation—continue to be with the people of France, Algiers, Lebanon, and Russia, the victims and their families, who are suffering during this time.

With worldwide attention and support for defeating terrorism, America has a new opportunity to draw a line in the sand and lead a global coalition. The United States, our allies, and those who oppose terrorist groups must come together on a comprehensive plan for eliminating terrorist organizations, like ISIL, al Qaeda, and all those who support terrorist activities, whether it be on the Internet or in all sorts of ways that we are discovering today.

America must provide the leadership and use all of the resources at our disposal to eliminate these terrorist organizations and their supporters. I understand that the world is facing a humanitarian crisis and it is a serious problem.

I think we here in the Congress all understand that our first responsibility is to protect and defend the American people from all enemies, foreign and domestic. We take an oath when we are sworn in every 2 years for that purpose.

The Syrian refugees are seeking safety, and the United States has a thorough vetting process for those refugees and others. We can always improve our efforts to protect the American public while at the same time providing the very humanitarian aid that is necessary.

Recent terrorist attacks have led Congress to assess the current process the United States uses to grant entry to refugees who are seeking safety from their country. These are women and children. These are innocent people who have been terribly impacted by the civil war in Syria. There are camps in Jordan with over a million and a half people, and Turkey has a similar number. Of course, we see the accounts of these refugees fleeing to Europe.

What do we do? We have to respond. The legislation that passed today and the legislation that the Senate has introduced today is an effort to improve the current system. Clearly, these legislative efforts are a work in progress and they will change.

To succeed, we must work closely with the President always to focus on ways that we can improve to protect

American citizens because we know this, that terrorists never ever sleep. I believe the administration is doing everything it can to make absolutely certain that our efforts to provide that humanitarian support does not threaten American lives.

In addition to ensuring that a strict and thorough vetting process is in place, we need to pursue comprehensive efforts that include working with our allies to end this civil war in Syria, which, as we know, is the primary source of this refugee crisis.

Let's be clear. It is easy to Monday-morning-quarterback this, but there are multiple causes to the conflicts in Syria and, in essence, more than one war that is taking place.

There is the civil war that is caused by Assad, but there is a proxy war between Russia and Iran against the Sunni nations. Then, of course, there is a conflict going on between Turkey and the Kurds.

Then, of course, there are our collective efforts for the majority of the countries to go after ISIL and their horrific crimes. We have conflicting alliances within the multiple conflicts that are taking place within Syria today.

□ 1445

Therefore, it is not easy as we try to sort this out in a way to put this comprehensive strategy together. If a global coalition is put in place, we can, I believe, combat this terrorism activity and bring those terrorists responsible for these horrific crimes, crimes against humanity, to justice. And we must.

Let's face it. They have declared war on Western civilization and our very way of life. I know that the President is working very hard to put this comprehensive effort together.

Ladies and gentlemen, Madam Speaker, this is not nor should it be a partisan issue. Every Member of Congress and the President go to bed at night, and we wake up in the morning with the safety of the American people being always our first priority.

Let me repeat that. This is not a partisan issue. We all fear for a worst case scenario. Therefore, we must be working together in a bipartisan effort on any concepts of legislation that we consider with the administration, with the President to continually improve our ability to protect our American citizens.

Now, it is important that we understand that this will be costly, and sacrifices will inevitably be made. Today, American men and women are in harm's way in the Middle East, serving in our military, doing their very best on multiple fronts. It is not just the sacrifices they are making, but it is the sacrifices their families are making as well.

It is essential that we come together to develop and implement a long-term comprehensive plan. At the end of the day, it is the only way we will protect

our freedoms and our way of life. This is what is at stake, and this is why, as we go home for the Thanksgiving recess, with our families and friends, we contemplate how we might do a better job working with the administration.

As we look at this Thanksgiving week coming up, truly we have a lot to be thankful for in this Nation. We must remember as Americans, the common values that we share, the bonds that we hold most dear are far, far stronger than whatever differences we may have.

Madam Speaker, I wish my colleagues here in the Congress, as we go back to our homes throughout America, a very blessed Thanksgiving with their families and friends. May God bless the United States of America, and may He grant us the guidance to work together in a more united way to solve these difficult challenges we have in front of us today, because we know, working together, all is possible.

Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

SYRIAN REFUGEES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT) for 30 minutes.

Mr. GOHMERT. Madam Speaker, these are the times that try men's souls.

After so many Americans have given the last full measure of devotion for their country, for our freedom, for the freedom of so many others, we are at a time in our history when we have enemies reporting that they are entering the United States. That is confirmed by the Director of the FBI and others in this administration. As is now reported, there are active ISIS elements in every State in the Union.

Some say, well, those who want to suspend bringing in Syrian refugees, wouldn't that be like telling the Jews during World War II they couldn't come to America? Actually, it would be more like saying we are going to suspend bringing Germans—we are going to keep bringing in German Jews because clearly they are being persecuted. We are going to try to save them from the Holocaust, but we are going to suspend bringing in those who appear to have similar backgrounds to the Nazis because we are not sure who is Nazi and who isn't.

Can you imagine dealing with what France has dealt with after we welcomed with open arms Nazis before and during World War II, if that had been the policy of the Roosevelt administration? Thank God it wasn't. But, unfortunately, Jews were turned away before and during World War II.

The President wants to continue bringing in refugees, continue the mass migration of illegal aliens into the United States. We have this report from yesterday by Brandon Darby and Ildefonso Ortiz. They report on eight